

“Without Agreement:” When only one side agrees to Public Talks

In this scenario, one side will present its case unilaterally in the dialogue documents. The objective is to ultimately engage the opposing side in this public negotiating process. The timetable for this dialogue will be up to the body overseeing the Public Talks process, with the understanding that the schedule must meet the needs of the negotiators and their publics.

An expected result of this process is to increase pressure on the non-participating side to engage in public dialogue. As the engaged party (Is this a word?) takes steps to have its version of history and its negotiating points distributed worldwide, the other side will discover that its arguments are not part of the public discussion and that the participating party's world view is more likely to be accepted.

The Beginning of the Rules and Terms for Scenarios in which only one party is engaged

Proposed Operating Principles for the Body Overseeing the Public Talks Process:

- 1. Even though only one side of the conflict may initially be engaged in the Public Talks process, it still needs to be overseen by an impartial organization with the capability to eventually supervise and distribute both sides' view of the conflict without favoritism. This organization will maintain a web site that features available Dialogue Documents and supporting material and will distribute information to appropriate audiences throughout the conflict zone and the wider world.**
- 2. The ultimate goal is for each side of the conflict to take advantage of equal access to the media and to its audiences.**
- 3. The international distribution of the Dialogue Documents through major print, broadcast or other media will be the responsibility of the overseeing body. The overseeing body will fund distribution of the dialogue documents.**
- 4. The overseeing body would not edit the content of any Dialogue Document except to ensure that the format and terms are followed.**
- 5. The party that wishes to engage in Public Talks must agree to the terms and conditions set by the overseeing body before its views are published.**
- 6. It is recommended that any masthead be reflective of the supervising organization and that that organization be viewed as the sponsor of the communication.**
- 7. Production of the documents, broadcast segments and web content would be consistent with standards common in the countries involved in the discussions so that, for instance, an insert can be prepared, printed and distributed with local papers to the broadest possible audience. The documents would be available on line at the same time they are available in print.**
- 8. Deadlines for each phase of Public Talks would be adjusted on a case by case basis so that print, broadcast and web information appear simultaneously.**

Overview

If only one side agrees to publish their dialogue documents for public scrutiny, the participant will prepare the documents according to a pre-agreed template. The documents will include such topics as a history of the conflict, questions for each side and the reasons certain questions are being raised.

Throughout the process, it will be apparent that the other side is welcome to participate and that it will receive equal time and space if it decides to do so.

These documents would be published at intervals negotiated in advance, for example, every two weeks.

The following is designed as a quick two page overview of the terms. The formal terms will be provided in much greater detail.

Format and content:

Each shared dialogue document will provide equal space for both sides. For example, the front and back covers will be split in half with one side consistently on the left and the other on the right. Content from the front page will be continued on subsequent pages. Each pair of facing pages will consistently feature one side on the left and the other on the right.

All Dialogue Documents will be sized so that they can be inserted into local newspapers or magazines or distributed on a stand-alone basis. It is anticipated that these documents would be a standard magazine size of 8 ½ x 11 inches.

The documents would also be available for review on line under the sponsorship of the supervising organization.

Visual supports

Presentation of the dialogue documents should be under the auspices of the sponsoring organization and a two-inch-deep header would reflect the identity of that organization rather than one or both of the entities involved in the dispute.

Each side will have the option of placing a photo, map, symbol or other visual item near the top of their front page column. It is anticipated that the one or two main leaders of each side would be featured on the front page of each Dialogue Document (Note that a separate pdf is now being created that will show this format in detail)

Inside pages: Each side can use 20% of each page to feature a non-text item such as a photo, graph, news story etc. that would support their case. (Certain sections such as the “Questions and Answers” would not have any visual elements.) Each side would have the option of either using this 1/5th page, including the caption, in either one or two parts per

page.

Round 1: 16 pages

Presents a history of the conflict, the primary areas of disagreement and visions for the future

Because the history of a conflict is usually one of the most contentious and revelatory issues, 9.5 pages of the first round of Dialogue Documents will be devoted to history as the initial challenger sees it. The history discussion will begin at the top of one of the two columns on the front cover page. (The split front cover creates the 1/2 page). The question section (since there are no answers supplied by that other side) comprises two pages for the participating party. The participant creates a preface for each question and then the question is featured in bold at the end of that segment. Over two pages, four to six questions could be posed to the party's silent opponent.

The entire back page can be used by the participant to create a message of its own choice.

Round 2: 12 pages

Historical context is separated from current issues

The supervising body will guide the engaged party in deciding the frequency and content of ongoing publication. When the opponent continues to refuse to participate, the dialoguer may prepare negotiating proposals, history, questions etc.

In Round 2, the length of the history section may be reduced and the engaged party may even begin to concede that the parties agree on some aspects of their shared history.

Minor concessions at this stage may help to engage the opponent in Public Talks. If this happens, the process starts over with Round 1 as outlined in the "With Agreement" section.

Round 3: 16 pages

Negotiating points are presented and explored

In this round, the engaged party will begin to address specific negotiating points, again with the intent of drawing the opponent into the discussion in order to counter the dialoguer's well-argued points.

The dialoguer's vision for the future would wrap up this document.

Round 4: 16 Pages

Constituencies begin to understand the basis for compromise

As the process moves forward, the engaged party continues to use the format established in Round 4.

At this stage, the dialoger begins to depict the detailed tradeoffs needed to reach agreement and shows the compromises required by both sides.

While the engaged party will not be immune to charges by extremists that they are selling out, the majority of their constituencies will be able to understand why compromise is needed and what the trade-offs will be. This makes the hoped-for agreement less vulnerable to distortion by political opponents that it would be if the agreement were revealed only in a media announcement made at the end of negotiations.

Even if the opponent never engages in Public Talks, this process provides a range of benefits:

- The history of the conflict has been explored and some level of compromise achieved
- The public has been involved in the discussions and has had the opportunity to critique the arguments and provide input.
- The dialogue has been exposed to new ideas from the public that can move the negotiations in a new, more fruitful direction.
- Those afflicted by the conflict have been prepared for the trade-offs necessary for successful negotiations.
- Extremists' potential objections have been anticipated and addressed.

Round 6: Face-to-Face negotiations

Two sides agree to formal face-to-face talks.

Should this process ultimately result in face-to-face negotiations, it is vital that they are conducted with the maximum possible transparency, since one side has been silent to this point.

Once these negotiations commence, the supervising entity will continue to provide the public with progress reports that give equal weight to each side. These updates would be briefer documents than those published during the prior phases, but would clearly delineate the areas where agreement is growing and those areas where the parties remain intransigent.

Thus, the public maintains the ability to both understand and influence the debate as it moves forward.